

A SHORT VIEW OF THE
LIFE, SENTIMENTS, AND CHARACTER

O F 4804.aaa.31

J O H N M O R T, ¹⁻⁴

IN AN ADDRESS TO THE
DISSENTERS OF ATHERTON;

AND IN A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN NEW BENT CHAPEL, JANUARY 20, 1783.

BY H. TOULMIN.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

TWO FAMILY PRAYERS, BY MR. MORT.

THE SECOND EDITION CORRECTED AND IMPROVED.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED IN THE YEAR MDCCXCIII.



TO THE SOCIETY OF
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS
IN ATHERTON*.

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

SUCH is your regard for the memory of our late worthy patriarch, that I am persuaded it will be doing you a kindness, if I attempt to improve and perpetuate your acquaintance with his character. This, I flatter myself, I shall be able to do in some degree, as I have been obligingly favoured, by his much esteemed executor, with a perusal of some of his letters and other private papers. It will scarcely be in my power to add any thing to your knowledge of his family, or of the incidents of his life: on which account I should decline saying any thing relative to either, were it not probable that the following discourse will fall into the hands of a few friends, to whom some little intelligence upon these particulars might be agreeable.

Mr. John Mort was the last male representative of a respectable family, of Warton Hall, in this county. During the civil war in the reign of Charles I. his

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family

* Atherton is a *township* in the parish of Leigh. Chowbent is a *village* in the township of Atherton.

family signalized itself by a steady attachment to the royal cause *. But upon the severities which, in the reign of Charles II. were exercised towards the dissenters, the conduct of Mr. Mort's grandfather afforded an example among many, of the tendency of

* An old writer, of the opposite party, in his account of the taking of Preston, says, " There were
 " divers slain on their side in the assault, and as if
 " men must have needs singled out some, of set purpose, for the slaughter, yea, the Manchesterians
 " themselves could scarcely have picked out fitter men,
 " (if they would any) for the sword, than those that
 " were slain in the fight; namely, the Major of Preston, by name Mr. Adam Mort (a man resolute
 " even to desperateness, in the cause he stood for,
 " who had oftentimes been heard to say, and swear
 " too '*He would fire the town ere he would give it up,*
 " *and begin with his own house*') who fighting most
 " desperately, and having killed one of the colonel's
 " men in the fight, with push of pike, instantly after
 " lost his own life for it, together with his own son
 " also, a bold and desperate young malignant. Sir
 " Gilbert Houghton's brother, a captain of their
 " horse, and a desperate papist, was also slain." Vicars' Jehovah-Jireh, God in the Mount, or England's Parliamentary Chronicle, 4to. 1644, p. 269.

Some years after the above event (viz. Aug 25, 1650) a great uncle of Mr. Mort's, who fought by Sir Thomas Tyldesley, very narrowly escaped with his life near Wigan.

of persecution to increase the strength of the religious party against which it is employed. Filled with indignation at the conduct of the court, touched with pity towards the unfortunate nonconformists, who were not permitted to separate in peace from the church by law established; the grandfather of our late friend, joined himself to the dissenters, and encouraged them to meet in his own house for the purpose of divine worship. The person who generally officiated as minister of the congregation assembled in Warton Hall, was Mr. James Woods,* one of those two thousand noble, conscientious clergymen, who, when the *Act of Uniformity* was passed, disdained to continue in a post, which they could hold no longer but by a prostitution of religious principle. This conduct of Mr. Mort's subjected him to some of those hardships which had excited his compassion towards the nonconformists, and he was, more than once, under the necessity of paying the fine, required by law, for suffering a conventicle in his house. Finding no reason to expect more just and humane treatment upon the accession of James II. the family began to direct their attention towards New England, the asylum of many of their brethren who, in their native country, had been robbed of the right of

A 3

worshipping

* The father of Mr. (commonly called General) Woods. He was the stated minister at the old chapel, upon Chowbent. He was son of Mr. Woods, of Ashton, in Mackerfield, who was also one of the ejected ministers, and died in 1668.

worshipping God according to the dictates of their consciences.

A person was, therefore, sent to America to procure a settlement for them, and they were actually preparing to leave a country to which they were united by the most endearing ties, when the revolution of 1688, disclosed a bright and animating prospect to the friends of civil and religious liberty. Upon this the thoughts of removing to New England were dismissed: and, the *act of toleration* being passed, public religious service was regularly performed by Mr. Cheney in one of the apartments at Warton Hall. I find an honourable mention made of these hearty friends of liberty and religion in the life of Mr. Matthew Henry. Mr. Henry (says the writer of his life) contracted a very intimate acquaintance with Mr. James Woods, of Atherton, and with Mr. Mort's family, a family well known in that country for their constant regard to religion, and great respect to the faithful ministers of Christ, both in the present and last generation. Mr. Robert Mort*, father to him who is, at present, head of the family, was a gentleman, that feared God above many: he was one of the greatest examples of humility, charity, and primitive christianity, that our age has known: he was loved and honoured by all of what persuasion soever; the most profane and loose of all his neighbours, were hardly ever known to speak evil of him: he

* Grandfather of the late Mr. John Mort.

he greatly honoured God and religion, and his posterity are blessed. (Henry's Life, p. 196.)

The removal of the Mort family into Atherton, was of signal benefit to the society of dissenters belonging to this place, who at that time assembled for the purposes of religious worship in the old chapel upon Chowbent. Mr. Nathan Mort (the father of our late friend) was induced to make peculiar exertions in behalf of our dissenting society, by a strong personal attachment to the minister, Mr. Woods, junior, a man who will be long remembered in this neighbourhood, as a facetious companion, as a faithful servant of the lord Jesus, and as a firm friend to the liberties of his country.

It will be an article of intelligence to none of you, my brethren, that in the year 1715, alarmed at the progress of the pretender, he headed a body * composed

* The following is the exact copy of the letter which occasioned Mr. Woods' expedition. A slip of it being torn off; I have been forced to supply the words inclosed between the ()

“To the Rev. Mr. Woods, in Chowbent, for his Majesty's Service.

CHARLES WILLS.

“ The officers here design to march at break of day for Preston, they have desired me to raise what men I can to meet us at Preston to-morrow, so desire you to raise all the force you (can) I mean lusty young fellows

posed of all the hale and courageous men in his congregation, armed with the implements of husbandry, and marched them to Preston, where general Wills commissioned him to secure the possession of Walton Bridge: which brave and loyal conduct king George I. was pleased to acknowledge by an honourable memorial of his favour. Nor will you soon forget his active zeal in procuring assistance to erect a large, commodious chapel, when, in consequence of your steadiness to the cause of liberty, at the general election in the year 1722, the lord of the manor, warmed with that party-spirit which then burned in almost every bosom, deprived you of the place of worship in which you had been used to assemble: a measure, which in many respects proved highly advantageous to the interests of your society, but a measure, which, we persuade ourselves, his descendants of the present day, were it in their power, would have too much greatness of mind to imitate.

Among

fellows to draw up on C(uerden Green, to be there by 10 o'clock to bring w(ith them) what arms they have fitt for service, and (scythes) put in streight polls, and such as have not, to bring spades and bill hooks for Pionee(ring) with; pray go immediately all amongst y(our) neighbours and give this notice

I am

your very faithful

WIGAN 11th Nov. 1715

Servant

H. HOG(HTON)

Cuerden Green is about two miles from Preston in Wigan Road."

Among the late Mr. Mort's papers, I find an epitaph, which (as he was accustomed to do for most of those whom he peculiarly esteemed) he drew up soon after the death of Mr. Woods, and which, I doubt not, it will give you pleasure to peruse.

T H I S
IS INSCRIBED,
AS A TESTIMONY OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE
TO PERPETUATE THE MEMORY
O F
THE REV. JAMES WOODS.
ANIMATED WITH AN ARDENT ZEAL FOR THE
HAPPY CONSTITUTION OF HIS COUNTRY,
BY A BRAVE AND GENEROUS CONDUCT IN THE
YEAR MDCCXV
HE ACQUIRED AN HONOURABLE NAME AMONG
THE FRIENDS OF PUBLIC LIBERTY:
BY AN OPEN, CHEERFUL, AND UPRIGHT
CONVERSATION,
PROCEEDING FROM THE GOODNESS OF HIS HEART,
HE ATTRACTED THE ESTEEM OF ALL WHO
KNEW HIM.
AFTER SERVING THIS SOCIETY AS A CHRISTIAN
MINISTER,
WITH AFFECTION AND FIDELITY,
IN THE SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS AND PIETY, ABOVE
SIXTY YEARS,
HE FELL ASLEEP, FEBRUARY MDCCLIX.

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The respect you entertain for the memory of this worthy person, will plead an apology for my having as yet made so little mention of Mr. Mort.

John Mort, the younger son of Mr. Nathan Mort, was born at Warton Hall in the parish of Dean, on March 30, 1702, new stile. When he was about ten years of age, his father removed into Atherton, and placed him under the care of Mr. Barrow the school-master of this place, intending that he should appear, in future life, in the character of a christian minister. The earnest wishes of his father, in this respect, were painfully disappointed; for the young man felt himself utterly averse from the idea of engaging in the profession for which he was intended; partly because he had no taste for some of the studies preparatory to it, and partly because his natural powers of speech, were by no means such as it is highly desirable that a public speaker should possess. But the hearts of his friends were so tenaciously fixed upon his appearing in the office of a teacher of religion, that he thought it necessary, in order to secure his future comfort, to remove to some distant situation. Upon opening his mind to his elder brother, it was determined, that he should retire to Nottingham. Thither he accordingly went in the nineteenth year of his age, and bound himself an apprentice to a stocking-weaver. At Nottingham Mr. Mort first imbibed a spirit of inquiry. Dr. Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, had excited the
attention

attention of many dissenters in that town, and was beginning to produce a considerable revolution in their religious sentiments. Though the doctrines which are termed orthodox, had been carefully instilled into the mind of Mr. Mort, he felt a disposition freely to investigate religious subjects. Fortunately a reading-society was established at Nottingham, of which he gladly became a member: and as those books were wisely admitted that canvassed religious questions (which are of all the most interesting and important) he was enabled to pursue his enquiries, at a trifling expence, and with the advantage of the company of those fellow-searchers after truth, who could either quicken his progress, by removing obstacles which, when alone, he might have been unable to surmount, or check that ardour for pushing forward, which sometimes carries a man into the mazes of error and scepticism.

Those who have a due sense of the moral dangers which beset a young man, full of spirits, glowing with youthful ardour, distant from the controuling eye of a parent, will acknowlege the hand of the kind providence of God, in the disposition which, at the most critical period of life, Mr. Mort discovered for the improvement of his mind, and in his being able to connect himself, whilst among strangers, with a set of serious companions. So sensible was he of the advantages which he derived from being at Nottingham, that he retained an uncommon partiality
for

for that place to the latest period of his life. He could scarcely give a plainer proof of the high opinion he had of such associations for reading as he was there a member of, than by being instrumental, as he was fifty years ago, in establishing a book society in this village, and by viewing with the greatest pleasure the more recent exertions for extending christian knowledge, which have been made by a person, who, in the humbler department, assists in conducting your public religious services ; and to whom, you will permit me to say, I think, the cause of free enquiry, is under considerable obligations.

Mr. Mort continued at Nottingham about three years and a half. Upon his return to Atherton, he united with his brother, in carrying on the fustian business, preserving, in mercantile transactions, the ingenuous simplicity of the christian, and maintaining to the last, amidst all the allurements of interest, a character strictly irreproachable.

With respect to Mr. Mort's views of the doctrines of the gospel, at this period ; it does not appear to what extent he had proceeded in doubting of the truth of those religious tenets, which he afterwards rejected as corruptions of christianity. That the *Athanasian* * *doctrine of the Trinity*, was no longer considered

* To those of you who are not acquainted with the Athanasian creed, the following passages will be a curiosity. “ There is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.—The
“ Father

considered by him as a doctrine of the scriptures, is a point which, I conceive, will not admit of any doubt. He had probably made up his mind, as we term it, in favour of the opinion, that the lord Jesus, though a creature, was greatly superior to men and angels, and existed before the creation of the world. Satisfied with this idea of our lord's person; it is likely that he gave no attention to the question concerning his pre-existence: and his mind was less at liberty to pursue inquiries of this nature, in consequence of his being much engaged for many years in the study of history, of which, I am informed, he possessed a very extensive knowledge. He was, however, led to reconsider his notion of our lord's person, in a later period of his life, by the writings of Mr. Paul Cardale, and by some articles in the Theological Repository, upon, what is called, the socinian doctrine. His thoughts were directed to those publications, by some of his particular acquaintance whom he held in great esteem, and whose friendly debates

“ Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the
 “ Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet there are not three
 “ Almightyies, but one Almighty. So the Father is
 “ God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God;
 “ and yet there are not three Gods but one God.—
 “ This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man be-
 “ lieve faithfully, HE CANNOT BE SAVED.” So says
 the ingenious author of *the Creed of Saint Athanasius*.

debates upon the subject discussed in them, he often heard with silent, but thoughtful attention. After maturely considering the arguments advanced both in conversation and in print, against the opinion that our great master existed before he was born of Mary; he embraced the doctrine which was held by the general body of believers in the apostolic age, and in the age immediately succeeding it *, viz. that the lord Jesus was properly a human being, “ a man approved of God †,” but, like all other creatures, dependant upon God for every thing, so that “ of himself he could do nothing ‡.” The publications which he had seen upon the subject, afforded, he thought, a satisfactory explanation of those few texts of scripture in which our lord speaks of himself as “ coming down from heaven §,” and of those which may seem to intimate that he had a being before he appeared in this world.

He took peculiar pleasure in perusing the productions of Dr. Priestley, a writer from whose various works (says a very capable judge) above those of any other in our own country, the rising generation might reap the greatest advantage, both in respect of useful know-

* Of this see Priestley's History of Early Opinions concerning Christ.

† Acts ii. 22.

‡ John v. 19. and 30.

§ See the Sequel to an Apology on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, by T. Lindsey, A.M.

knowledge and virtuous improvement*. Four discourses of Dr. Lardner's, published since his death by one possessed of the amiable spirit of a Lardner, Mr. Wiche, of Maidstone, entitled, "Two Schemes of a Trinity considered, and the divine Unity asserted," gave much satisfaction to Mr. Mort: but what especially leads me to *mention* them, in this place, is that I have been informed, upon very good authority, that they established your late excellent minister, Mr. Mercer, in the belief that our lord was properly a man, and had no existence, before he was born in the land of Judea, about eighteen hundred years ago. These examples of a mind ingenuous, and free to embrace the truth, at a period of life when most men are becoming more and more confirmed in their old habits of thinking, are truly worthy of our admiration, though it may be feared that they are too great to be generally imitated by us.

The sentiments which Mr. Mort entertained upon other religious questions, were widely different from those, which, in the present age, are esteemed orthodox. He was firmly persuaded, that the scriptures nowhere represent the *death of Jesus*, as designed to appease the wrath or to satisfy the justice of that Being, whose nature is love and goodness itself, and who, ages before our lord was born, was worshipped by

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his

* See a most valuable piece entitled, *Vindiciæ Priest-
leianæ*: An address to the students of Oxford and Cam-
bridge, by T. Lindsey, A.M.

his servants, as " a God ready to pardon, gracious " and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness *." The cloud by which his education had darkened those views of the divine character which are presented in the gospel, was greatly dispersed upon his perusal of a small but very valuable tract, entitled, " Second Thoughts on the Death and Sufferings of Christ." He also often spoke in terms of the highest approbation of Mr. Graham's Fourteen Letters on the atonement. " Mr. Graham has said " enough (observes Mr. Mort, in a letter to a friend) " totally to bury the orthodox notion of atonement, " which so much dishonoured and abused the Almighty, and disgraced the gospel."

Having had frequent conversations with the late Dr. Taylor of Warrington, upon the doctrine of the scriptures concerning the *state of man between death and the resurrection*; he was led to believe, that there is no just ground for the opinion, that the soul exists in happiness or misery whilst the body is mouldering in the grave. The principal consideration which convinced him that the whole man dies at once, was that Jesus and his apostles always direct our attention to the *resurrection* *, which, he thought, they would never have done, had they believed that good men would
be

* Nehem. ix. 17.

† See Matt. xiii. 40, 41. Luke xiv. 14. 1 Thess. iv. 13, &c. Tit. ii. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 13.

be admitted into heaven, perhaps thousands of years before that resurrection will take place.

It is known, I doubt not, to many of you, my friends, that respecting the *rite of baptism*, Mr. Mort had nearly the same ideas as those, which were maintained two hundred years ago by that excellent person Faustus Socinus, and which have been more recently defended by Mr. Emlyn, and Mr. Wakefield. He thought that the lord Jesus never intended that baptism should be practised by his disciples in future ages: though, I conceive, he saw a propriety and utility in parents' requesting some christian friend or minister to unite with them in prayer to almighty God, upon the birth of a child, as well as upon any other interesting event.

His ideas of the nature and design of that particular method of preserving a remembrance of Jesus, which we call the *Lord's Supper*, are sufficiently apparent in the following address which you recollect he printed upon a sheet of paper and dispersed among you.

A free and affectionate Address to all those professing Christians, particularly the Protestant Dissenters, that do not communicate at the Lord's Supper, but run away, as if they thought it dangerous, or disagreeable, to be good. By a Lover of pure Christianity, unadulterated with human Systems.

I AM apt to think that this neglect proceeds from a false notion of the nature of this institution: but

a careful attention to the history of it, by the apostles and evangelists, would do more to give you a right understanding, and settle your minds about it, than reading whole volumes on the subject. There, you find our saviour in the most affecting discourses with his disciples, when going to leave them for a while, cheering them with the promise that he would send them a comforter, and that he would come again to receive them: that where he was, they might be. He desired them in the most friendly manner to meet at certain times, to eat and drink together, in thankful remembrance of him, until he came again to receive them.

What can be more plain, natural, and rational, than this friendly desire at parting? You profess yourselves christians, and would be displeased with any one for denying that you are: but can you esteem yourselves worthy and faithful disciples of Christ, whilst you deliberately refuse to shew him this respect, so affectionately desired? Your saviour cannot be pleased with you: for when Mary, out of her great respect to him, had poured on his head that costly ointment, he shewed his displeasure at those that blamed her *, and said, that this instance of respect to him should

* Probably on account of the selfish and wicked disposition, which led Judas to censure Mary, and not because he was solicitous to receive extraordinary personal attention. See *John* xii. 6.

should be known, wherever his gospel should be preached.

Allow me to expostulate with you further. Put yourselves into a case something analogous. Had you by infinite toil and suffering saved a certain number from poverty, misery, and death, you could not but expect their gratitude: and you certainly would resent it, if, contrary to your desire, they had refused to meet at certain times, to testify their grateful remembrance of you their saviour. Shew, then, this respect to your saviour: he will be pleased, and it will be your for profit. Your social dispositions will be improved. At this meeting all the communicants will be united together in love as one soul: for can it be possible they should disobey the parting command of their saviour, so often repeated? You will at that time be employed, not only in contemplating the love of the Father, and the generous, unparalleled love and condescension of the son; but you will naturally be refreshing your memory with considering the character of your saviour, his sufferings, example, teachings, and exhortations. You will learn what temper and disposition pleases him most, by considering the humane, compassionate, benevolent temper of the apostle John, which raised him to the honour of being the favourite of our lord. I should think it almost impossible but these meditations must inspire you with the firmest resolutions to acquire this happy temper.—Can you think it a matter of indifference

ference at the great day of retribution, to be owned by the impartial judge, and rewarded as his favourites before angels and men?

You will, probably, be glad to read Mr. Mort's own account of his sentiments, upon other points, as well as upon the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It gives me pleasure, that it is in some measure, in my power to gratify you in this desire.

In a paper I have before me, this worthy person speaks of himself in the following manner. " I was
 " very carefully brought up in the religion of the
 " Westminster assembly of divines. But when I
 " arrived at a mature age, and judged for myself,
 " (after a diligent endeavour to understand the New
 " Testament, making a proper use of what helps I
 " could meet with, for that end) I found that christi-
 " anity was very different from the human system
 " taught in the Assembly's Catechism. I therefore
 " renounced the latter and embraced the former.
 " After living about fifty years (for I am now only a
 " few weeks short of eighty-three) I am perfectly
 " satisfied with my choice, and for some years have
 " thought that the fidelity I owe to my saviour,
 " obliges me to use my best abilities to promote pure
 " christianity, unadulterated with human systems."

What Mr. Mort meant by pure christianity, you will learn from the following contrast, which many of you, probably, have already seen. It is inserted here, merely because it gives one view of Mr. Mort's religious

religious sentiments. The references which are added under each article, will assist you in forming some judgment how far it contains a just representation of the doctrine of the Assembly's Catechism, and of the christian scriptures, though, you will permit me to observe, that the doctrine of the New Testament is, in my opinion, to be sought rather in the general strain and spirit of it, than in a few detached passages.

" The difference of the religion of the assembly of divines at Westminster, from that of Jesus Christ, seems to be great; as *contrasted* in the *columns* underneath. That of the assembly of divines is represented on the left; and that of Jesus Christ on the right column; with respect to *authority, doctrine, and character.*

AUTHORITY.

Derived from fallible and prejudiced men.

DOCTRINES.

The Deity split into three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: all equal in power and glory. (Assemb. shorter Catechism: An. 6.)

AUTHORITY.

Christ and his apostles were commissioned by the Almighty, to be the light of the world, to shew the true way to eternal life and happiness. They were approved by God, by a voice from heaven, by miracles, by wonders, and signs.

DOCTRINES.

One God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ. The Father greater than the Son. The Son obedient to the Father in all things, even to death. 1. Cor. viii. 6. xi. 3. John xiv. 28. John v. 30. John x. 17.

Children.

Children guilty of Adam's sin, and liable to eternal punishment. An. 16---19.)

The innocent punished for the guilty. Christ suffering the wrath of God for a time. (An. 25 and 27.)

A certain number predestinated to salvation. All the rest left to perish. (An. 20.)

Personal righteousness availeth nothing for a man's justification, unless he believe that another person's righteousness shall be imputed to him. Thus depreciating the moral character. (An. 33.)

Children blessed by Jesus Christ; and his followers warmly exhorted to be like them in innocence, who are the peculiar care of angels. Of such is the kingdom of Heaven. Mark x. 13---6. Luke xviii. 16. 17. Matt. xviii. 3.

God the Father, well pleased with his Son, loved him because he laid down his life. John x. 17. John xvii. 24, 5. Phil. ii.* 8---14. Heb. xii. 2.

All, without exception, that repent and believe, fear God, and work righteousness, are accepted and saved. Those that do good, are merciful and compassionate, will most certainly enter the joy of their Lord. Acts. x. 35. Matt. xxvi. 31, to the end. 1 John ii. 2. iv. 14.

He that doth righteousness, is righteous. They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars in the firmament. Our saviour himself doing the greatest honour to moral excellence, by admitting into his most intimate favour and friendship, the apostle who excelled the others in the moral virtues: Possibly on this account exempting him from the most severe trials, and revealing to him the knowledge of the most important future events. 1 John iii. 7. Dan. xii. 3. John xix. 26.

CHARACTER

* The words (ver. 6.) rendered "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," are translated more agreeably to the general tenor of scripture, by many learned men; "thought not the being like a God a thing to be greedily seized by him."

CHARACTER.

Of the followers of the
assembly of divines.

Persecutors.*

CHARACTER.

Of the followers of Jesus
Christ

Persecuted-----As, Mr.
Biddle, Mr. Emlyn, Mr.
Peirce, Professor Simpson,
&c. &c. for their faithful ad-
herence to the important
truths of christianity."

Among the friends to whom Mr. Mort sent the above contrast of the calvinistical doctrines, with those which he esteemed to be the doctrines of the christian scriptures, was a worthy person whose character and mental attainments are an honour to his lowly station. I need not apologize to you for introducing a letter from him to Mr. Mort, upon the occasion.

" S I R,

Heaton, Dec. 21, 1782.

I RECEIVED yours with a paper you sent me. I esteem it a very particular favour. It is an honour I could not have expected. I am also much obliged to some friend or friends for giving you so favourable an idea of my character.

I perused your paper with a great deal of pleasure. The point of view, in which you have placed the difference between the religion of the divines at Westminster and that of Jesus Christ is very striking. Though I have long been convinced that those doc-
trines

* Yet there are many of them who have suffered for righteousness sake; more, indeed, in these latter ages, than our Unitarian Christians; but not for their attachment to orthodoxy, as they have never been persecuted on that account.

trines held by the Westminster divines are not only inconsistent with reason and our best notions of the perfections and character of the Divine Being, but are also contrary to what our saviour and his apostles taught in the New Testament; yet I cannot say, that I had ever contrasted them in my own mind in so plain and obvious a manner.” “ The difference of character seems to be the natural result of the difference of doctrines. For as the religion of Jesus leads men to be meek and humble, candid and charitable, merciful, compassionate, and forgiving, and to do good to all; the doctrines of the Westminster divines (by representing God as partial, arbitrary, cruel, unjust, punishing the innocent for the guilty, electing some to everlasting life, without any regard to moral character, and dooming the rest to everlasting punishment; these doctrines) lead many who entertain them to a kind of presumption and spiritual pride, esteeming themselves the elect of God, and the favourites of heaven, censuring and condemning all who differ from them as reprobates and the enemies of God, shutting up their bowels of compassion from them, and even sometimes thinking that they render God service by persecuting and afflicting them.

These being some, among many, of the unhappy effects of embracing the doctrines of the Assembly of Divines, or calvinism: it will be the wish of every liberal-minded, benevolent man, who is a sincere friend to the best interests of mankind, that it were in
his

his power to do something towards opening the eyes of such deluded, but yet well meaning persons. But the prospect of success, I fear, seems not to be very promising. For whilst such persons are generally so full of themselves, as to look on all, who differ from them, as being in the wrong, and they themselves only in the right; whilst they declare, that common sense is a fool, and natural reason blind and erroneous; whilst they consider the workings of their own imaginations and fancies, as divine inspirations, whilst they entertain such unworthy notions of the Divine Being, and esteem moral excellence as of no value; what can be expected from them? what arguments can be made use of to convince them? Indeed the method, which you have pointed out, appears to be a likely means of convincing every one, who is inclined to consider such subjects with any degree of coolness and moderation. More especially is it adapted to have the happiest effects upon the minds of such as are in the earlier part of life, who are not yet wedded to any particular system, but have their minds open to receive the truth." "Something of the like kind with yours, but on a different subject, has been done some time since in the introduction to a pamphlet entitled, 'A Free and Serious Address to the Christian Laity, &c.*' wherein the object of worship of the holy scriptures, is contrasted with the object of worship of the Church of England,

C

and

* By Joshua Toulmin, A. M.

and of some dissenters. The author of the Address, thinks it the duty of those who embrace unitarian sentiments, to separate themselves from the trinitarian worship, and form distinct societies.

In the London Evening Post, of the 26th—28th of November last, we have an account that the week before ‘the Rev. Dr. Disney of Swinderby in Lincolnshire, and formerly of Peter House, Cambridge, resigned all his ecclesiastical preferments, on account of his objections to the trinitarian forms of worship in the established church.’ Another noble instance of integrity, firmness, and resolution in the cause of truth and conscience, to be added to the venerable list of a Lindsey, a Jebb, an Evanston, a Robertson, &c. &c.

I am afraid I have trespassed much on your patience by the length of this. I have no apology to make but the reliance I have on your generous indulgence and candour. I know of nothing that should have hindered me from doing myself the honour and pleasure of seeing you, but a strong sense of the obligations I am under of attention to one of the best of mothers now grown almost helpless, through the infirmities of old age and sickness. If I can possibly make it convenient, I intend to come to see you, some time ere it be very long. In the mean time I remain

Your much obliged friend and

humble servant,

JAMES KAY.”

Though our late friend, and the worthy person whose valuable letter I have in part transcribed, entertained such serious and alarming apprehensions of the pernicious tendency of the orthodox or calvinistical doctrines; yet you will not imagine, that they concluded, that every person who held those doctrines must have been destitute of moral worth and excellence. Those leading principles of christianity, which are embraced by every serious believer in Jesus, are frequently, one would hope generally, powerful enough to counteract the mischievous influence of any set of speculative opinions. Besides, truly good persons, shutting their eyes to the dark side of their religious system, will naturally endeavour to find out some practical use in every supposed truth: they will impress it upon the minds of their children, and thus, those very doctrines, which one should think would poison a man's disposition, have really a considerable share in forming and perfecting his religious character. Genuine charity should also teach us to believe, that almighty God will never condemn men for their errors in religious worship, when they are accompanied with a good heart, and spring from a pure desire of serving him according to the best of their abilities.

“ It is my opinion,” says Mr. Mort, “ that the Father of our lord Jesus Christ is the one supreme God, that he only is to be worshipped, and that (as a great writer expresses himself) to assert, that the supreme Creator of all things, hath in these last ages

“ of our world been made one of his own creatures
 “ is blaspheming the eternal Deity. It is also my
 “ opinion that worshipping a plurality of gods is idol-
 “ atry. But notwithstanding this, I have so much
 “ charity for those mistaken worshippers, as to believe
 “ that their good intention will be accepted.”

But though Mr. Mort entertained such just and liberal sentiments concerning those who, believing it to be their duty, worship Jesus, the highly favoured of God; yet you know, my friends, that he himself never paid religious adoration to any but the one only living Jehovah, nor, by his presence, countenanced the devotions of a church which besides the Father of our lord Jesus Christ, prays to a God the son, and a god the holy ghost. To worship the “man Christ Jesus,”* he thought would be for him to be guilty of idolatry. He rejoiced therefore in seeing unitarians act consistently with their principles, and often spoke with rapture of those worthy persons, who voluntarily resigned their posts of honour and profits in the established church, that they might be no longer compelled to worship any other than the only true God. I also find him mentioning with much pleasure, Mr. Christie, a merchant of Montrose, in Scotland, who, in the year 1781, with a society of professed unitarians, withdrew from the trinitarian worship of the Church of Scotland, and has since that time regularly conducted the public services of religion,

* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

gion, agreeably, as he conceives, to the precepts and examples of Jesus and his apostles. " This most
 " learned and most excellent christian (says Mr. M.)
 " has published his case, and several of his own ser-
 " mons, proving that the Father of our lord Jesus
 " Christ is the one supreme God, and that he only is
 " to be worshipped, which carries irresistible con-
 " viction to every unprejudiced reader."*

In the copy of a letter to a friend, dated May 22, 1786, which accompanied a little piece respecting Mr. Elwal, who was tried at the Stafford assize in the year 1726, for maintaining the doctrine of the divine unity, Mr. Mort remarks, " that a plain, honest,
 " illiterate man, about fifty or sixty years ago, should,
 " by studying the meaning of the New Testament,
 " have a truer knowledge of religion and christianity,
 " than almost any one, at that time, of the learned
 " bishops and clergy of the church of England, or
 " of the learned dissenters, how astonishing ! That
 " this honest cutler, should, at the Stafford assize,
 " vindicate his cause without the help of counsel,
 " and prove so clearly that important truth, of the
 " Father of our lord Jesus Christ being the one, only,
 supreme

* See a farther account of the unitarian christians in North Britain, in a most entertaining and improving work, entitled, *An Historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine and Worship, from the Reformation to our own Times.* By Theophilus Lindsey, A.M.

“supreme God, so as to baffle and confound the
 “learned clergy his prosecutors, how astonishing!
 “how pleasing!”

You may perceive how much the heart of our venerable friend was set upon doing all he could to overturn the calvinistical system, from a letter which, just before his death, he sent to our brethren at Warton, with the view of leading them to inquire into the truth of those doctrines which he looked upon as corruptions of christianity.

“*To the MEMBERS of the WARTON Religious Society.*

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS;

I doubt not but you will receive this address with candour, which is dictated with a sincere wish for your welfare. You have been brought up in that system of religion called orthodox, in which there now appear to be, as is made evident to impartial, unprejudiced inquirers, some dangerous errors, that have a bad tendency. One is, making the son equal to the Father; which is a direct breach of the first commandment, and is contrary to what our saviour always said of himself. Another very dangerous error, is, that God will not pardon the sinner, upon his repentance and amendment, without a substitute, suffering in his stead; which is expressly contrary to what is asserted both in the Old and New Testament. Another error, is, that some are predestinated to be
 saved

saved, the rest left to perish. Another error is, that *our* obedience and goodness, is of no avail, but another's must be accepted instead.

These errors originated at Rome,* and have been forced on men's consciences by persecution; which character is the antichrist prophesied by the apostles Paul and John, and not the *Pope* of Rome, but a *Character*.

Never forget what is most pleasing to God, and our saviour, which is an humble, humane, compassionate, benevolent temper. This temper made the apostle John our saviour's favourite.

I think the above truths are self-evident, and need no elaborate reasoning to prove them. The contrary do much harm, as they give a false notion of the moral attributes of the Deity."

Mr. Mort's zeal against the distinguishing tenets of orthodox christians, was more warm and determined, than probably it would otherwise have been, in consequence of a persuasion, that they are an insurmountable obstacle to the conversion of serious unbelievers of every denomination. "Whilst the jews and deists (says he) take the system of religion taught in the Assembly's Catechism, for christianity, it is almost impossible they should be christians." He, therefore, thought that it clearly appeared to be the duty of rational christians, "to use their utmost endeavours

* See an History of the Corruptions of Christianity, by J. Priestley, LL.D.

endeavours to advance the interests of pure, uncorrupted christianity. They must see their obligation to do this, as they profess to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and are daily praying, that his kingdom may come and his will be done. They must, also, necessarily rejoice in beholding the pillars of antichristian establishments already shaking, and the supporters of them trembling, and must indulge pleasing hopes, that the time is not very far distant, when they shall fall, and agreeably to prophecy, an universal reformation in the minds and manners of men take place."

There is a small slip of paper, upon which Mr. Mort has written, "Underneath this stone lies John Mort; who learned his religion from the New Testament, and not from corrupt human systems. He thought it his duty to do his utmost, to root out or lessen the mischievous effects of that antichristian religion called calvinism."

You have seen in what light our late friend viewed the doctrines of the church of England. But whilst he rejected her creed, and thought her chargeable with idolatry in her devotions; he approved of her *mode* of worship in preference to that of the dissenters. In a letter to a very worthy and respectable person, with whose activity in introducing a printed form of prayer into the religious services of the society with which he was connected, Mr. Mort was well acquainted, he thus speaks of himself. "I am one of those very few dissenters,

dissenters, who for many years have been displeased with the almost universal prejudice of even those called rational dissenters, against the use of liturgies in public worship. No one more rejoiced when I first heard, some years ago, of your generous design to introduce that mode of worship."

As many of you my friends, are probably but little acquainted with the question concerning the propriety of printed forms of prayer, and may wonder upon what principles Mr. Mort could approve of a mode of worship so little adopted by dissenters; you will be pleased with an extract or two from a letter upon the subject, in answer to that just mentioned.

"Did not observation and experience evince, how much the generality of mankind are led by custom and habit, more than by reason and reflection; one would wonder at the aversion which many amongst the rational dissenters have entertained to the use of a liturgy in public worship, more especially as with the use of it, an opportunity of extempore or free prayer being admitted, the peculiar advantages of both might be united. In this view, I cannot but wish the practice more general; I mean only amongst those whose minds are sufficiently enlarged to concur in declining the introduction of any disputable opinion, desiring to retain nothing, but what any candid and sincere christian may join in the use of.

Though I think the use of a liturgy preferable to the present mode of worship among dissenters; yet I
esteem

esteem it a happy circumstance that it has not in times past obtained amongst them, as it might have been the means of preserving many erroneous notions and absurd phrases, which are now gradually sinking into oblivion: but wherever christianity is understood and professed in its genuine simplicity;* there one cannot but wish, that the public offices of devotion, might be rendered stable and permanent, as a lasting barrier against the encroachments of superstition and enthusiasm.

The use of responses in public worship, is, I think a delightful and animating part, tending to engage the attention of the people, and rendering the service more social, than where one person acts a solitary part.

It is not my intention to enlarge on the comparative merit of the two different modes, as I recollect I am writing to one, who has sufficiently considered the subject. But I would beg leave to mention another circumstance, wherein the peculiar advantage and expediency, of a liturgy or pre-composed form, must, I think, be generally acknowledged. In some places, the number of dissenters is too small to support a constant

* But since it is impossible to know with certainty when christianity is professed in its genuine simplicity; would it not be wise in every society when adopting a liturgy, to invest a number of persons with the power of revising and correcting it, whenever they should think it expedient?

stant minister; they have only service amongst them occasionally, or, perhaps, once a month: at other times they do not meet, for want of a suitable person to lead their devotions in the present mode: some therefore stay at home: others go to the established church, which occasional conformity tends, by degrees, to render them indifferent to the principles of their dissent, and thus has led many families to conform entirely: this might probably be prevented, and their meetings kept up by the use of a form, which any persons of moral conduct, and moderate abilities, might read in a manner, at least edifying, though not with the propriety of superior talents *."

So averse was Mr. Mort from extempore prayer, that, as I am informed, he always made use of a form in conducting family worship. You will be pleased with those specimens of his devotional spirit, which I shall transcribe for the use of any who may think proper to adopt them, in performing the daily religious services of their families. How nearly he agreed in sentiment with the writer of the letter just quoted, respecting the peculiar propriety of forms of prayer being adopted by societies, which have no stated minister, you will see from the following address. It was written about the year 1774.

" It

* Some valuable observations on Liturgies may be seen, in an excellent work entitled, " The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, by W. Paley, M.A. Archdeacon of Carlisle."

“ It is humbly proposed to the consideration of all
 “ rational dissenters, whether if the following plan of
 “ rules and orders, or others of the like nature, were
 “ adopted and observed by their religious societies ;
 “ it would not tend greatly to improve the particular
 “ members of them, in useful knowledge, in amiable
 “ dispositions, and in the practice of the christian
 “ virtues.

“ If they have no stated minister * ; let those mem-
 “ bers, who are of the best character and abilities,
 “ undertake

* “ For the apprehension of the necessity of a stand-
 “ ing ministry, for the purpose of conducting public
 “ worship in christian assemblies, seems to be a mistake,
 “ and may have been one reason of the dissolution of
 “ some dissenting societies, when not able to maintain
 “ a minister.

“ It is written (says Tertullian, who lived sixteen
 “ hundred years ago) *He hath made us kings and priests*
 “ *to God and his Father.* The distinction between
 “ clergy and laity was made by the church, and ap-
 “ proved by the bench of elders. So that where there is
 “ none of that bench, you yourself both offer and
 “ baptize, and are your own priest ; nay where there
 “ are three, they make a church, though they are lay-
 “ men. For every man lives by his own faith ; nor
 “ is there any acceptance of persons with God.
 “ Therefore if you have the right of priesthood in
 “ yourself, you must have a right to exercise your
 “ priesthood, when it is necessary.” Quoted by Gro-
 “ tius in a Tract, printed in ‘ A Defence of the Rights
 of the Christian church, 1709,’ p. 180.

“ undertake the services, usually allotted to ministers,
 “ of leading the devotions of the assembly in prayer,
 “ and of reading the scriptures, together with such
 “ lectures, as are best calculated to give them a right
 “ understanding of natural and revealed religion, and
 “ which best tend to enforce the practice of every
 “ christian duty. It is presumed that there might be
 “ found some in every, or at least most christian
 “ societies, willing to undertake this service ; as with
 “ the help of written forms of prayer, and the many
 “ useful discourses now in print, no uncommon abilities
 “ are necessary for the undertaking. All of them
 “ would cheerfully concur in their endeavours to improve,
 “ as much as possible, that important and delightful
 “ part of religious worship, the singing of
 “ God’s praise.

“ In general : let there be a warm and sincere
 “ zeal in all the members, to promote, as far as in
 “ their power, the happiness of every particular member
 “ of the society, more especially his spiritual
 “ welfare. Those who are in poverty and distress
 “ should be relieved by those in more affluent circumstances,
 “ as nearly as can be, proportionably
 “ to the several abilities of the latter.

“ Harmony of affections, and the sincerest friendship,
 “ should be carefully cultivated and maintained
 “ among all the members, though differing in their
 “ opinions, about controverted points of divinity.

D

“ Let

“ Let the members of the society take every pro-
 “ per opportunity to be well acquainted with one
 “ another. Let the more knowing take pleasure in
 “ communicating knowlege, in the most condescend-
 “ ing, acceptable way, to the more ignorant. Let
 “ the rich be far from assuming a haughty air, and
 “ learn that meek, that humble spirit, which will
 “ endear them to all their fellow members of inferior
 “ rank. It would not be amiss, if these were at
 “ certain times admitted to their tables. It is very
 “ practicable to render table conversation very im-
 “ proving as well as pleasant. By such behaviour,
 “ their warmest affections and best wishes will be
 “ gained. A grateful, teachable disposition, a sober
 “ and diligent conduct will be the consequence.

“ With regard to all other denominations of
 “ christians; let every member be possessed of the
 “ most catholic principles, and behave towards them
 “ in the most charitable and generous manner.

“ Let all the members show their affection to
 “ Christ, their love to one another, their gratitude
 “ to God for the gospel, by cheerfully embracing the
 “ stated opportunities, weekly or monthly, of join-
 “ ing with their fellow-christians in celebrating the
 “ lord's supper: at that time, more especially con-
 “ templating the character, teachings, sufferings,
 “ condescension and love of their great master.

“ Let all the members, approving these rules and
 “ heartily consenting to the practice, give in their
 “ names;

“ names ; by which means they would all be known
 “ to one another.

“ Vicious and refractory members, after all prudent methods have been taken to reclaim them,
 “ should have their names erased.

“ Every well-disposed person, after duly considering these rules and orders, desiring to become a
 “ member, should be admitted, and subscribe his
 “ name accordingly.

“ A church, though small, thus constituted and
 “ moulded, as it were, into one soul, bearing one
 “ another's burdens, considering one another to provoke unto love and to good works ; how lovely,
 “ how beautiful the idea !”

You, my friends, can all bear testimony that Mr. Mort himself uniformly paid the strictest attention to the rules which you find he had laid down. You know, for you have often told me, how kind he was to all, how attentive to the wants of the poor, how mindful of your spiritual welfare. Having a perfect acquaintance with the congregation, he frequently, you recollect, expressed his concern to you, when he observed that your seats in the chapel were empty, on that day in the week, which all confess is best spent in gaining religious knowledge, and in cultivating a christian temper. His anxiety for your continuing to improve in an amiable and heavenly frame of mind, would not permit him to quit the world, without leaving behind him that token of his affection, which

you will meet with in the following discourse. In that, as well as in some observations which have already occurred, you will perceive what an impression was made upon his mind by a consideration of the character of the apostle John. But the following anecdote shows it more strikingly. A few days after he was first impressed by meditating upon the humane temper of the bosom friend of Christ, as he was riding briskly from Manchester, intent upon being home by tea-time, he was suddenly stopped by a poor woman, who begged him to give her something. He was vexed at being detained, and would not hear her. But as he lay on his bed in the night, and reflected upon what had passed in the day: his heart smote him for this conduct, and he could not be easy, till he had, in the morning, walked upwards of two miles to see her and give her some little relief. He himself thought that he should not have done this a few years before.

That practice of his at your social meetings, which I have some times heard you mention, was truly characteristic of the amiable temper of his mind. When others had given as a toast the lord of the manor, or some other great person, to whom they were attached by interest, it was common with him to give '*the Poor of Atherton*:' reminding you by these means of the nobler ties which should bind man to man. How happy is it, when even the employments of our more unbended hours, become *mementos* of our duty,
and

and are made to cherish the most generous and benevolent affections.

It was from a similar regard to your improvement, that he was so earnest in keeping up the conversation club, which he had introduced. The topics which were discussed at these meetings, were generally such as had an useful tendency. They brought together upon the same footing, persons of different descriptions. They tended to remove every unnecessary distinction between the master and the servant: and the characters of both were mutually improved by such friendly communications. It is a black stain upon the complexion of the present times, that a club which had subsisted half a century, which had neither injured, nor thought of injuring any one, which was composed of some of the most respectable persons in the neighbourhood, which hath always been conducted with decorum, with peace, and with harmony, should lately * have been broken up, in consequence of threat that the publicans who suffered them to meet any longer in their houses, should be deprived of their licences.

You, my friends, are well acquainted with the life of this good man, and it is not necessary in order to confirm you in the best opinion of him, that I should mention any more instances of the excellence of his heart. In the following extract from a letter † which

D 3

he

* In January, 1793. † Written in July 1786.

he addressed to a particular friend * in Scotland, you will perceive that Mr. Mort drew a perfect likeness of himself, in his picture of a genuine christian.

“ But, dear madam, why should you alarm us
 “ with fears of never meeting again in this world.
 “ Be so good to indulge us with the hope of meeting
 “ once more at least. Your good company a few
 “ weeks, will not only add to our present happiness,
 “ but will contribute to qualify us for greater felicity
 “ in that world where perfect love and friendship
 “ dwell. I do not see why we should not, while in
 “ this world, anticipate the happiness of the next.
 “ Certainly a genuine christian enjoys, whilst on
 “ earth, a felicity of the same kind as the pure spi-
 “ rits above. What I mean by the genuine christian,
 “ is, one who has learned from Christ himself an
 “ habitual regard to the Almighty in his whole con-
 “ versation ; one who fears, loves, and trusts in him,
 “ is pleased and delighted that all things are governed
 “ by him, who is benevolence itself ; one who has
 “ learned from the divine teacher, with the assistance
 “ of his holy spirit, to ingraft this god-like principle
 “ of benevolence into his whole soul ; in short, one
 “ who loves the Lord his God with all his soul, and
 “ his neighbour as himself. From such a christian,
 “ a selfish, sordid, covetous temper is entirely erad-
 “ cated ; pride is wholly extinguished, envy killed,
 “ malice annihilated ; idleness, intemperance and
 “ debauchery

* Mrs. Ferguson.

“ debauchery prevented : in a word, ‘ he is born of
 “ God (as the beloved apostle emphatically expresses
 “ it) and cannot sin ;’ it would be self-denial, con-
 “ trary to his very nature. His delight is in doing
 “ good ; every faculty is exerted in this work : it is
 “ his meat and drink. How blessed he, even in this
 “ disordered world, who is thus acting in concert
 “ with all the pure spirits above ! is viewed by them
 “ with delight ! is respected by the good below as
 “ one of the excellent of the earth ! This is the sal-
 “ vation into which Christ has brought us. Every
 “ good christian in this state, is already come to
 “ mount Sion, to the city of the living God, to the
 “ heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company
 “ of angels, &c. &c.

“ Dear madam, how much is it to be wished,
 “ that true christianity were understood by all its
 “ professors ! And yet I think the knowlege of it, is
 “ easily learned, by studying carefully the life and
 “ character of our divine teacher, his doctrines and
 “ precepts, the practical part of St. Paul’s epistles,
 “ the epistles of James, and John, particularly the
 “ last, if men’s minds have not been already poisoned
 “ by reading books, mixed with antichristian prin-
 “ ciples. These have been my sentiments for many
 “ years, though different from those of many serious,
 “ well-meaning persons. I am more confirmed in
 “ them in my old age.”

The

The ideas which Mr. Mort had long imbibed concerning the divine perfections and the nature of christianity, as they had a great influence in the formation of that amiable character he possessed, were likewise the comfort and support of his old age. They made the decline of life happy, because they enabled him to look forward to futurity with christian exultation. By his kindness he had created sincere and firm friends : and his having neglected to form that connection in life, which to some is a necessary provision against the loneliness of age, never appeared to have abridged the comfort of his latter days. He was always full of spirits, and it was after only a few hours indisposition, that he fell asleep, January the 12, 1788, in the eighty-sixth year of his age.

You, my friends, have deeply and justly lamented his death. But let us rejoice, that, though man is mortal, those christian virtues which render man the object of our love and veneration, are immortal. They warm, it is to be hoped, many of your breasts. There are, we trust, in our religious society, some who will tread in his footsteps, and emulate his zeal and his exertions in behalf of practical religion and of pure christianity. You will naturally have your eyes fixed upon *him* in particular, who sat at the feet of our late patriarch, who was peculiarly marked out as an object of his esteem, and who hath already afforded you some evidence of his being actuated by the same principles.

principles. But whilst we look up to *others*, let us never forget what we *ourselves* owe to the cause of truth and religion. There is not one among us who is not bound to do his utmost towards saving his own soul, and the souls of other men. That you may never be unmindful of your obligations, and that the Almighty may graciously accept and prosper all your sincere and upright endeavours to promote the knowledge and influence of the gospel, is the hearty wish and prayer of, my christian friends,

Your affectionate and faithful brother
in the lord Jesus;

H. TOULMIN.

CHOWBENT, JAN. 27, 1789.

The principal part of the following character was first inserted by Mr. Gore, in his Liverpool Paper. It afterwards appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine, for February 1788.

The late Mr. John Mort was the last male representative of an ancient and highly respectable family : a man equally distinguished for his piety, his benevolence, and the guileless simplicity of his manners. The leisure he enjoyed, from the avocations of business, was principally devoted to the study of the scriptures ; and, unlearned in the subtleties of scholastic divinity, his inquiries were directed by the light of a
clear

clear understanding, and the dictates of an upright heart. As the truths of christianity opened upon his mind, he was charmed with the majestic simplicity which marks the religion of the gospel: and whilst he felt its superior influence in enlightening his understanding, enlarging his views, and regulating the affections of his heart, the anxious and unremitting zeal with which he endeavoured to propagate his principles, in that circle through which his influence could extend, speaks a lesson of instruction to those who are devoted to theology by profession. He had been for many years a zealous, an active, and a truly useful member of the society of unitarian christians at Chowbent; and was remarkably successful in his endeavours to promote free inquiry, and what he esteemed to be unclouded views of christianity. But his religion did not terminate in mere speculation; it was seated in his honest heart. The uniform piety he maintained through life, was equally the result of principle and affection. The regularity of his devotions, and the cheerfulness of his temper, were equally remarkable. He was open as the day to melting charity, and plain-hearted hospitality was ever found beneath his roof. The poor blessed him. Every public spirited design which lay within the reach of his abilities, he was ever forward to support. By the force of personal character, he retained a patriarchal authority in his neighbourhood to the last. In every exigency,

exigency, his opinion was consulted, and his advice followed, as it was always the dictate of integrity and of a sound understanding. It is remarkable that old age had not upon him, the same effect as upon the generality of men. His mind was the same in the decline as in the meridian of life: there was the same cheerfulness, the same humane sensibility, the same devotional fervour, the same ardour in the cause of liberty, of truth, and of religion. Healthy by temperance and exercise, his life, though long, was unimbittered by sickness; and his death was almost instantaneous, and without a groan. Go, worthy man, prepared to enjoy a station in a happier world, suited to the virtues which adorned thy life in this!

The following lines were written by the celebrated Mrs. Barbauld, when upon a visit to Mr. Mort, about sixteen years ago.

“ Happy old man! who stretch’d beneath the shade
 “ Of large grown trees, or in the rustic porch,
 “ With woodbine canopies, (where linger yet
 “ The hospitable virtues) calm enjoy’st
 “ Nature’s best blessings all, a healthy age,
 “ Ruddy and vigorous, native cheerfulness,
 “ Plain-hearted friendship, simple piety,
 “ The rural manners, and the rural joys,
 “ Friendly to life. Tho’ rude * of speech, yet rich

In

* Alluding to a natural impediment in his speech.

“ In genuine worth, not unobserv’d shall pass
“ Thy bashful virtues ; for the Muse shall mark,
“ Detect thy charities, and call to light
“ Thy secret deeds of mercy ; while the poor
“ The desolate and friendless, at thy gate,
“ A numerous family, with better praise,
“ Shall hallow in their hearts, thy spotless name.”

A

S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

MR. JOHN MORT,

AND PREACHED IN THE

NEW CHAPEL AT CHOWBENT,

IN ATHERTON,

JANUARY 20, 1788.

E

A

S E R M O N, &c.

L U K E xxiii. 47.

CERTAINLY THIS WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN.

THERE was something uncommonly awful in those appearances in nature, which accompanied the death of Jesus. Such a concurrence of extraordinary events had been scarcely ever known before. “ Be-
 hold the vail of the temple was rent in two from
 the top to the bottom : and the earth did quake :
 and the rocks rent : and the sun was darkened :
 and the graves were opened . and many bodies of
 the saints, who slept, arose.” We cannot wonder
 therefore that the centurion, and those who were
 with him, being witnesses of these things, feared
 greatly, and glorified God, saying, “ Certainly this
 was a righteous man.” Had the same centurion
 been acquainted with the life and conduct, as well as
 the death of Jesus, it would have abundantly con-
 firmed this favourable opinion of our master. Had
 he

he been with him; whilst he went about doing good; had he witnessed the affection towards his associates, his tenderness to the afflicted, his compassion for the multitude, his love for his country, and his piety to God; he would undoubtedly have said, "Certainly this is a righteous man." These were the surest indications of his character: and these are indications of character, by which we may judge of men in every age and in every situation. Miraculous attestations to the moral excellence of any one, are no longer to be found: nor have we any reason greatly to regret it, when the natural and more direct proofs of the best of hearts, are so clear and decisive in favour of a man, as they were in favour of our late venerable friend Mr. Mort.

No one who was acquainted with this true disciple of the amiable Jesus, will be backward to apply to him, the declaration of the centurion concerning our lord, "Certainly this was a righteous man." Were I disposed, my friends, to make the virtues of the deceased, the theme of a whole discourse, contrary as such a practice is to the reigning fashion, I should entertain no apprehension of your censure; could I, by so doing, render justice to his character. Such, I am persuaded, is your veneration for his memory, that you would gladly see me breaking through a general rule, and would cordially accompany me in every expression of affection and respect.

No one can be more clearly convinced than the preacher is, of the impropriety of making it a common practice, upon occasions of this kind, to pass some particular encomiums upon the character of the deceased. But, at the same time, he thinks, that there are men of singular worth, appearing now-and-then in the neighbourhood, whom we cannot suffer to pass by unnoticed, without doing an injury to the cause of religion. These are men, whose lives ought to be held up as objects of imitation ; their examples being frequently, perhaps, of more importance to those who were connected with them than the examples of the worthies of antiquity. To the lives of the one we ourselves were probably eye witnesses ; but the lives of the other we know nothing of, but by report and tradition.

It would be happy, my brethren, if we were properly affected by reviewing the life of the friend, whose departure we now lament. Never did we know a man, who hath exhibited a pattern more deserving our attention and imitation. Indeed, my friends, I feel myself utterly unequal to the task of giving you an *adequate* view of his character : and were I to attempt it, I should fear, that those whose acquaintance with him has been more perfect and of longer duration than mine, would say that I had not done justice to him. To such therefore, I would refer any who have not lived in habits of intimacy with him for information.

Ask

Ask those, who were so happy as to form a part of his family ; ask them what man he was in private ? They will tell you, that he was perfectly regular in his deportment ; that he was remarkably attentive to religious worship in his house ; and uniformly studious to promote, by a cheerful temper and a kind demeanour, the peace and comfort of those with whom he was connected. Though he was ever forward, when it lay in his power, to do any thing for the benefit of others ; he was always singularly anxious to be as little troublesome as possible himself. He never appeared to have a wish of availing himself, in the least, of those marks of attention and respect, to which his age or his character, or his situation, entitled him. All whom he favoured with his acquaintance, will tell us that he was the agreeable companion ; and always the sincere, the open-hearted, the steady friend. The man whom he called his friend in prosperity, he called his friend in adversity : for his attachments were withdrawn only by a change of disposition or conduct in the objects of his regard.

But ask not such as were his intimate and select associates merely : ask every one who had any dealings with him, if there were ever a man who dealt with greater fairness and integrity. They will tell us that his honesty was always superior to a love of interest : that he hath considered himself as bound by the laws of God, to act in opposition to his own per-

fonal advantage in cases, in which the less scrupulous consciences of men of common probity would have suffered them to consider themselves as at perfect liberty. Yet it was never the disposition of our amiable friend, to be satisfied with a discharge of duties alone which are dictated by the principles of equity; for never did *universal love* glow with greater ardour in the human breast.

In proof of this, we may appeal to the sons of sorrow, of every description. But, indeed, an appeal to them must be unnecessary. The men who have witnessed his pity, and experienced his liberality, are to be met with any where in this neighbourhood, and there are few before me, but have heard some unfortunate man relate with what tenderness he has looked upon his distresses. An object of pity never went to his door in vain. Nor did he wound the feelings of the humble suppliant, with a long list of harsh inquiries, before he granted the boon of charity. A destitute appearance, and an honest countenance, he thought, entitled any one to his regard. Some may, perhaps, imagine, that he granted relief with too indiscriminate an hand. But he had an idea probably, that by checking the emotions of pity, upon principles of prudence, there is imminent danger of weakening the power of that amiable affection, and that it therefore became him to give the rein to his humane feelings, though he regarded only the improvement

provement of his own mind. Certainly, then, this was a righteous man.

But his title to the appellation of a righteous man, could not be more clearly proved than by his conduct as a member of this religious society. It was such a conduct as I have the confidence to think that every christian present must approve. For my *own* part, I should admire and respect the zeal of a liberal minded church-man, or Roman catholic, though not exerted in support of that particular form of worship, which is adopted by christians of our denomination: and I should be most blameably deficient in charity, did I not believe, that any of you, my brethren, if any of our brethren of the Church of England, or of Rome*, be present, would feel an equal veneration for the religious zeal of a man, who ranked himself among the protestant dissenters. Yes, my brethren of every sect, I believe that you have enough of the spirit of the gospel, to esteem excellence, wherever it is found. Inquire, then, of the members of this christian society, if there were ever one of their number more active or more useful than our deceased friend? They will assure you as strongly as they can, that they never knew his equal. They will speak of him as the father of this congregation. They will tell you with what generosity he contributed to the support of their respectability as a religious society; how earnest he was in promoting any plan for their improve-

* As I have been told is sometimes the case.

improvement in knowlege and in virtue, and for the maintenance of their peace and felicity. Indeed he had nothing more at heart, than to extinguish every spark of discord and animosity, and to fan the flame of brotherly love, that unity and harmony might universally prevail among us.

They will tell you, that he was equally exemplary in the regularity of his attendance upon public worship, and that, though for many years past, he might have pleaded his age, as an apology for more indulgence than he was accustomed to in younger life, yet, he was as constant as any one, to the day of his death. Though few men *needed* it less, none were more mindful of the means of improvement: for he never had an idea that because a man may, for the most part, be already acquainted with those truths which are delivered from the pulpit, he is therefore, excused from resorting to the place of public worship. But why do we mention these particulars? The single circumstance of his influence with this society of christians, is of itself a proof, that he was a respectable and useful member of the society. You, my brethren, will not scruple to inform any stranger that may question you, that the opinion of Mr. Mort would have weighed more with you, than the opinion of any ten persons in the congregation. You will at the same time assure him, that this influence could never have been owing to our friend's possessing greater property than other persons, or merely to the
liberality

liberality of his contributions to the support of public instruction, but to a singular amiable disposition, and to a general respectability of character. But when you are speaking of his influence over us, you will be careful not to let any one imagine that he was ever forward to exert that influence, but in promoting peace and unanimity. Very frequently has he freely given up his own views and sentiments to those of other people : and he has in many cases been silent, with respect to measures which he conceived would be of great utility, particularly with regard to the method of conducting public worship, merely from the apprehension, that his ideas might possibly vary from the ideas of some individuals in the congregation. You must all, my friends, have known instances of his backwardness to declare his own private opinion upon questions which have in course come before this society ; lest he should throw an undue bias in the way of your deliberations. It was his uniform wish to throw a bias on no side but on the side of virtue. To this point he directed all his influence. To improve the amiable dispositions of those with whom he was connected, was an object which he had at heart to the very latest hour of his life. With this view, he drew up, not long before his death, an address to this christian society, intimating a wish that it should be communicated to them after his departure. You, my christian brethren, I trust, will pay to it all the regard

regard due to the dying words of an old and much respected friend. I will recite it to you, believing that an attention to it may be of benefit, not to those only who consider themselves as members of this society, but to any of our fellow-Christians, who are not regular attendants at this place.

“ My dear Friends and Fellow-Christians of our Religious Society at Chowbent :

The uncommon respect you have always shewn me, makes me confident you will receive this, my parting and farewell address, with candour. Though the subject of it may be singular and out of the common way, I hope it may be of real service to some of you. It is my hearty wish that you would, with due care, consider what may be learned from a serious meditation upon an important part of the history of the life of our saviour Jesus Christ, as the following.

FIRST CONSIDERATION. Whether there was not one disciple whom he loved more than any of the rest?

SECOND CONSIDERATION. Whether it was not the humane, friendly, benevolent disposition of the apostle John, that made him this favourite?

THIRD CONSIDERATION. Whether it is not in our power, if we do our best, to attain to this amiable temper?

FOURTH

FOURTH CONSIDERATION. How inconsistent are those who know and believe this historical truth, and yet are unconcerned whether they attain to this amiable disposition : especially if they believe that our saviour will be their judge, at the day of final retribution ?

FIFTH CONSIDERATION. Whether those who attain to the amiable disposition of the apostle John, will not be owned and rewarded, by the impartial Judge, as his favourites, before men and angels, at the great day of final retribution ?

What good these meditations may do you, I know not ; but this I know, that these meditations on this part of history have done me more good than all the practical discourses which I have heard or read. *August 10, 1788.*"

From this you may see, my brethren, upon what his mind was most intent. It was upon making us wiser and better. " Certainly, then, this was a righteous man." In this light indeed every one is disposed to consider him ; for there have been few persons held in such universal esteem. He was respected and beloved not only by people of his own persuasion, but by men of all sects and parties. All were prepossessed in his favour. And where shall we seek for the cause of this, but in the *character* of the man. His rank, his wealth, his influence, his power, were by no means such as to procure him this regard.

It

It was merely the charitable use he made of the little he possessed ; his constant readiness to relieve the distressed, and in general, that “ humane, friendly, benevolent disposition,” he had learnt from the favourite of Jesus, which rendered him so much the object of universal love. Indeed had our fellow-christians of the established church or of the church of Rome, heard his expressions of charity and kindness for them, and for all the household of faith ; had they known with what uncommon satisfaction he has listened to such exhortations from the pulpit, as have been dictated by a desire of promoting the influence of a liberal and catholic spirit ; they would have been strongly confirmed in their favourable opinion of him, and with one heart and one voice would have echoed, “ certainly this is a righteous man.” They, therefore, will feelingly concur with his more immediate connections in lamenting that a man so excellent and so amiable is no more. But at the same time, we have reason to be thankful, my friends, that Almighty God was pleased to continue him to us, for a length of time, so much exceeding the common term of human life, and especially that he blessed him, with a capacity for usefulness, even to his latest days. And now, though he is sleeping with his fathers, let us not consider him as a friend whom we have lost for ever. He is only retired to rest, and will awake with renewed vigour in the morning of the resurrection.

tion. Those amiable qualities, those christian virtues which adorned his mind, and made him the object of our esteem and love, are only like the flowers in winter, withered, indeed, for a little time, but which, on the return of spring, will appear again in all their loveliness and beauty. Then shall we once more behold, and once more admire, that integrity, that generosity, that humanity, that piety, that zeal for truth and for religion, which in this world we have contemplated with so much delight and satisfaction. Then shall we see those virtues unfettered in their exertions by the various difficulties which weaken their efforts in this mortal state, and the good man himself traversing with ardour and with christian exultation, a much wider field of usefulness than the present world is capable of affording. Did I say that *we* shall behold him in the world of bliss? We *shall*, indeed, if we be possessed of a soul like his: but it is in vain for us to expect it otherwise. The society to which he will belong, will be that of just men made perfect: a society of which we must become members, would we have communion with him. Let us then endeavour to copy, as nearly as we can, that pattern which he hath left for our imitation. Let us retire to our closets, and review, as impartially as we are able, our dispositions and past behaviour, compare them with those of our departed friend, and mark wherein lies our principal deficiency. Let us mark it carefully, that in future our principal attention

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may

may be directed towards an amendment. Let us never forget how amiable our friend was rendered by the virtues which adorned his mind, how truly he became thereby the object of every one's love and veneration.

Do you, my brethren, who are members of this religious society, pay an especial attention to the character he sustained as one of our number. Let us call to mind his generous zeal, and his influence among us : and let it be the aim of every one of us, to fill his place, not by striving to acquire the same weight with the society, but by endeavouring to cultivate the same amiable spirit, and to do the same good. If, instead of this, he had sought popularity and influence, it is probable that he would never have obtained it. Had he not frequently sacrificed his private sentiments and wishes, though founded in truth, to those of other persons, he would never have maintained, justly as he deserved it, he never would have maintained the influence he had acquired. Let us, my friends, imitate in this respect, the example of our elder brother. Let us not be eager to bring forward any favourite plans, unless we be fully satisfied that the welfare of the society is intimately connected with them : nor let us vehemently support our own opinions, when we find that they vary from those of our fellow-christians, but let our moderation be known unto all men. If we be liberal in promoting the knowledge of religion, if we be lovers of
peace

peace and unity, and, above all, if we be unblameable in our deportment, and followers of that which is good, we shall obtain and preserve all the influence which a good man can wish for, or which a christian has a right to expect. But I say no more. I am addressing the disciples of Jesus. "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

A

PRAYER FOR A FAMILY.*

O LORD our God, we worship thee who art the only living and true God, besides whom there is no other. The idols of the heathen are vanity, and a lie: those who trust in them, are like unto them; but thou art from everlasting, to everlasting, God, without the least variableness or shadow of turning: the great Creator, the wise and righteous Governor, and the just Judge of the world. Worthy, O Lord, art thou of our most profound reverence and adoration, our constant and faithful obedience, our firmest trust and confidence, our joy and delight; for thou possessest all possible perfection, natural and moral. Thou art a Being of all-comprehending knowledge, unerring and infallible wisdom, unlimited power, impartial justice, boundless goodness, unspotted purity, unchangeable truth and faithfulness. These thy perfections are constantly exercised for the good of the whole creation. Wherever we turn our eye, what part soever of thy works we contemplate, we see the footsteps of an Almighty being; we see thy

* These prayers might be properly used at any meetings for the purposes of religious improvement, such as have been lately set on foot in this neighbourhood by the members of our congregation.

thy power, wisdom and goodness, manifested in a most glorious manner. We adore thee as our Creator, our constant Preserver, and the Redeemer of our souls. We praise thee who hast placed us so high in the rank of beings, in this lower world; who hast subjected all other creatures to our use and convenience, making man a lord in this lower world. It has pleased thee to confer on us the noble gifts of reason, intelligence and liberty, whereby we are made capable of yielding unto thee an acceptable service and obedience, and of attaining to the highest honours, to the most refined and solid bliss. Happy had it been for us, had we always behaved suitably to the dignity of our rational nature, and been faithful in thy service: but alas! we have reason to acknowledge, with the deepest shame, that we have neglected to cultivate and improve the noble talents which by thy goodness have been intrusted to us. In our carelessness we have suffered ourselves to be corrupted by the temptations that are in the world, through lust. The objects of our senses have often, through our own fault, made an undue impression on our minds: we have thereby been enticed to do many things unbecoming the dignity of our rational nature, much more unbecoming our character as christians. If thou shouldst be severe to animadvert on all our past follies and miscarriages, we should be miserable indeed: but with thee there is mercy, that thou mayest be feared. We rejoice to know, that thou art by the gospel of Jesus, reconciling a sinful world unto thyself, not im-

putting unto the humble, the penitent and obedient, their iniquity and transgressions. Thou has given us this assurance by thy son Jesus Christ, whom thou hast exalted to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins to thy people. Having such encouragement, we would sincerely repent of all our past follies: we would now acquaint ourselves with thee, and be at peace, that thereby good may come: we desire from the heart to forgive those who have trespassed against us: we would now engage ourselves without reserve in thy service. Be gracious, O Lord, to forgive all our past iniquities; receive us into thy favour; aid us by thy spirit, that we may make good our resolutions against sin; that we may overcome the world, and maintain constantly a just government over our passions, appetites and affections, regulating them according to the rules of reason, and of thy word. May we always live under the influence of a divine faith, and attain to that measure of it, which will give us a happy victory over this world. May we have that faith which works by love and purifies the heart and conduct: may the sincerity of our faith and love be manifested, by an obedient life, a fruitful conversation: and may we do all we can to advance thine honour, obedience to thy laws, and the good of mankind: especially may we strive to adorn our profession, by being examples of every thing that is virtuous and praise-worthy; aiming still at higher attainments in knowledge, wisdom and virtue: and may we be daily more confirmed and established in the ways

ways of truth and goodness. Amidst the many changes, difficulties, and trials of life, may we be enabled to preserve a becoming serenity of temper, always in patience possessing our souls: at last may we finish well, and have an abundant entrance into thine everlasting kingdom.

Hear,* O Lord, our prayers for others: extend thy merciful regards to the whole world. In compassion to the infirmities of mankind, send into every dark corner of the earth the saving light of thy gospel: and where thy gospel is sent, may it meet with due reception: may men learn from it, as it teaches them, to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously and godlily in this present evil world. O that men may every where learn to know and fear thee, and to work righteousness, that they may be accepted of thee. May christianity prevail in its native purity: may all professing christians learn an humble, charitable, benevolent disposition of mind: may there be no more destroying in all thine holy mountain: may none that profess themselves the followers of Jesus, dare to usurp the sacred rights of conscience: may those who have dared to oppress the cause of truth, be ashamed: may that liberty which Jesus has left to his churches, be maintained by all his followers: may our civil and religious rights be preserved to us to the latest generations, that ages yet unborn may praise thy name. Above all save us
from

* This paragraph may be omitted when the whole prayer would be too long.

from our sins, that iniquity may not be our ruin. By a sincere reformation, may we have better grounds to hope for the continuance of thy favours. Bless our king : may he rule in thy fear : may he still live and be a great blessing to us : under him may we enjoy peaceable and quiet lives, in all godliness and honesty. Bless the prince of Wales, form his mind to a love of piety, virtue, and liberty : may all the royal family be blessed : never may we want a protestant prince to sway the sceptre of these nations. May all of us in our different stations exert ourselves, and use the influence we have to discourage vice, to promote rational piety and solid virtue. In this important work especially may the ministers of the gospel be diligent and faithful, and do thou, O Father, make them successful. (*This day* may acceptable services be performed in all thy churches : may we worship thee who art a spirit, in spirit and in truth, and may the truths we shall hear or read, be useful to us.*)

We praise thee for the mercies of the past night (or day). It is thou who keepest us from the terrors by night, and from the arrows that fly by day : still be our kind guardian ; and may the close of every day be comfortable. Pity, O God of all comfort, those who want our mercies : ease the pained, raise up those that are bowed down : comfort the feeble-minded : provide for the poor : manifest thy goodness to those that love and fear thee. We ask all as the disciples of Jesus thy well beloved son our saviour ; and as he

has

* To be introduced on Sunday morning.

he hath taught us, would ascribe unto thee, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the one only living and true God, all might, majesty and dominion, now and evermore. Amen.

A

SECOND PRAYER.

O MOST great and glorious Jehovah, the high and holy One inhabiting eternity! Thou only possessest all possible perfection, art glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. Thou art the greatest and the best of Beings: goodness is thy nature and delight. Thou hast proclaimed thyself to be the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and mercy, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin; though thou canst by no means clear the guilty, such as are impenitently so. It has pleased thee to make a free and open declaration by thy son Jesus Christ, of thy readiness to forgive every sincerely repenting and returning sinner. We rejoice in thy promised pardon and salvation: we praise thee who hast called us with an holy calling; called us to virtue, to liberty, to glory. All things are now ready on thy part, for our being received into thy kingdom

kingdom, for our being made wise, virtuous, holy and happy. May not this salvation miss on our part, through our obstinacy, or negligence : may we cheerfully comply with the requirements of thy gospel : may we forsake every false way, be enabled to rectify the disorders of our mind, to assert the liberty of our souls : may the gospel of Jesus make us free, and we shall be free indeed. Enable us frequently and seriously to take an impartial and deliberate survey of our own tempers and characters, and to bring our actions before the tribunal of reason and conscience. And do thou, O most merciful Father of our spirits, search us and try us : remove the veil of self-love and partiality from before the eyes of our minds, and shew us to ourselves in our genuine colours. Whatever is irregular and perverted in our inward frame, do thou graciously assist us in rectifying. If there be any good dispositions in us, may they be abundantly strengthened and established by thee. May we never rest satisfied with any attainments we have already made in virtue, or think that we are already perfect : but forgetting the things which are behind, may we press forward with unremitting ardour towards the mark of the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Assist us in cultivating every divine and amiable disposition, that our tempers may be sweetened, our hearts purified, our manners refined, and that our souls may daily be advancing to perfection. We would learn of our dear and honoured master an humble,

ble, compassionate, benevolent temper of mind. May old things be done away : may all things become new : may we be created anew in Christ Jesus, to serve thee the living and true God : so may we behave ourselves, that on the most impartial examination of our conduct, we may have reason to approve it, may have confidence towards thee, and may always on good grounds rejoice in hope of glory. May we live under the influence of a divine faith, behave with becoming indifference to present things, knowing that we have not long to stay here. May we use this world as not abusing it; seeing the fashion of it passeth away; and whilst we are necessarily employed about things pertaining to this life, may we by no means be unmindful of our future interest. May we above all things take care to secure a good foundation against the time to come, seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness, not doubting but that all needful things will be added to us. Support us under the difficulties that yet lie before us in the present state of trial. May we be humble in prosperity, patient and resigned in adversity. May every affliction prove in thy hand, a kind and faithful means of discipline to train up our minds in the exercise of those virtues, which will make us useful here, blessings in our stations, and fit us for being joined to a purer society above, amongst whom, none that are impure, shall ever be admitted.

Blessed

Blessed be thy name, O gracious Father, for the mercies we have enjoyed through our past lives, and for the various comforts which surround us at present. We thank thee for the measure of health we enjoy in our bodies, and for the free and regular exercise of the powers and faculties of our minds. May thy kind providence still watch over us, and crown all our honourable undertakings and honest labours with success. Enable us to discharge every duty with integrity and cheerfulness, and to improve every blessing we receive from thee to thine honour and glory, and all the praise shall be rendered to thine excellent name. These our prayers we would present unto thee, O God of grace, in the spirit of thy son's gospel. Now unto the blessed and the only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, be all honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The following Character of Mr. MORT, (by Mr. JOSEPH SMITH, of Liverpool) is inscribed on a slab of marble in New Bent Chapel, dedicated to his memory by Mr. PETER VALENTINE.

THIS monument is erected as a testimony of veneration for the character of Mr. John Mort, the last male representative of a highly respectable family, and long a distinguished member of this religious society: who ended a life of usefulness and honour, on the 12th day of January, 1788, in the 86th year of his age. The leisure he enjoyed from the avocations of business, was principally devoted to the study of the scriptures; and unlearned in the subtleties of scholastic divinity, his enquiries were directed by the light of a clear understanding, and the dictates of an upright heart. The unremitting zeal, with which he endeavoured to propagate the principles of Christian truth, furnishes an example to those who are devoted to theology by profession. His religion did not terminate in mere speculation: the uniform fidelity he maintained, was only equalled by the ardor of his benevolence, and the simplicity of his manners. By the force of personal character, he retained a patriarchal authority in his neighbourhood, to the last. Though born to a liberal fortune, which was improved by a regular, and successful industry, he disdained the purposes of vulgar ambition, and studiously employed

the bounty of heaven, in relieving the sorrows of nature, and extending the happiness of life. Every public-spirited design he was forward to promote: he was open as the day to melting charity, and plain-hearted hospitality was ever found beneath his roof. The habitual devotion of his mind and the consciousness of useful exertions, produced that cheerfulness, which even old age was unable to impair; nor did he survive either the vigour of his understanding, or the sensibility of his heart, the fervour of his piety, or his generous attachment to the cause of liberty and truth. Through temperance and exercise, his life, though long, was unimbittered by sickness. His death was almost instant, and without a groan.

R E A D E R,

While you revere his character, endeavour to copy his example.

T H E E N D.

